

there was a recession, real wage growth went down; recession, real wage growth went down; recession, real wage growth went down. In this recession, real wage growth did not go down as much as it historically has; real wages stayed higher than they have been in the past.

During this period of recovery, it looks like—yes, that argument has merit—real wages are going down. However, one of the things we have to recognize is that this chart does not include benefits. When you add benefits to wages and get the total compensation that goes into someone's pocket, the picture changes. Consider the next chart. Again, the dark blue line on the chart is productivity, and it shows that employee compensation in total in a recession goes down as productivity goes up. It goes down as productivity goes up. It goes down as productivity goes up. It goes down as productivity goes up. And then, when the recovery takes hold, real compensation comes back up above the line.

Here are the facts. Taking this as the line between growth and shrinkage, real employee compensation, including benefits, has been in positive territory. It went below that, just as it has in every previous recession, but when the recovery took hold, employee compensation has gone into positive territory and come back up to join productivity, just as it has done historically.

Where do we get these arguments that real wages are going down? It is the difference between the two charts. The difference is that one chart looks at wages only, and ignores benefits. The other shows total worker compensation that includes wages and salaries, but also benefits workers receive. Now we can consider some statistics that I hope make the importance of the distinction between wages only and wages plus benefits very clear. The employment cost index data shown in the final chart shows that in the 1980s, real compensation growth grew at a 0.82 percent rate. In the 1990s, coming after the recession—we have taken the recession out of this—the period of growth during the Clinton administration stayed at virtually the same level. But from 2001 to the present, it is much stronger, at 1.11 percent.

How can that be, given the rhetoric we have heard? Well, if you go to the salary growth, take out the benefits, you find that portion of that wage and salary growth was 0.46 in the 1980s. It was 0.82 percent in the 1990s. It was only 0.39 since the beginning of 2001. This is the number which is being focused on as a demonstration of the fact that people's wages are not that good. But when you look at the benefits growth, you find that benefits grew in the 1980s at 1.76 percent. In the 1990s, at 0.73 percent growth, there was very anemic benefit growth. That is why this number is so close to this number, because the benefit growth actually pulled this number down. But when you get to what has happened from the beginning of 2001 to now, people are con-

tracting for more benefits. The benefit growth is extremely strong, which is why real compensation is stronger in the post-2000 period than it was in either of the previous two decades—not a bad economic record since the year 2000 and the recession we had.

I have more to say on this, but I recognize that other Senators wish to speak, so I will conclude here. I wish to make it clear that the facts demonstrate that we have a strong economy currently going, and the facts demonstrate that real compensation is keeping up with it. Productivity is going up at an accelerated rate, and real compensation is also going up at an accelerated rate. We should be proud of what we have accomplished since coming out of the recession of 2000.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, can you tell me what the order before the Senate is at this moment?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority has 2 minutes remaining in morning business.

Mr. DURBIN. Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine is recognized.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator LIEBERMAN and I be recognized for 30 minutes equally divided, but that prior to that recognition, my colleague from South Dakota be recognized for not to exceed 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I will not object, but I ask to be recognized for 10 minutes after the Senator from South Dakota, and I believe the Senator from North Dakota will be seeking recognition for 20 minutes. I don't know when Senator LIEBERMAN is arriving. Would it be appropriate now to lock in these three requests—10 minutes for the Senator from South Dakota, 10 minutes for myself, and 20 minutes for the Senator from North Dakota?

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I know of no objection to that request. I would not object.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I make a unanimous consent request that the Senator from South Dakota be recognized for 10 minutes, I be recognized for 10 minutes, followed by the Senator from North Dakota for 20 minutes, and the Senators from Maine and Connecticut be recognized for 30 minutes.

Ms. COLLINS. If the Senator will withhold, I will object to that because the Senator from Connecticut and I had been planning to speak at 11:30. So what I would suggest, if it would be acceptable to the Senator from Illinois, is that the Senator from Connecticut and I would cut our time from 30 minutes to 20 minutes but proceed immediately before the other Members are recognized. Would that be acceptable

to the Senator from Illinois, since we were here first?

Mr. DURBIN. The Senator from Maine is so persuasive. I don't know if the Senator from South Dakota still wants recognition.

Mr. THUNE. Yes.

Mr. DURBIN. So I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from South Dakota be recognized for 10 minutes, the Senators from Connecticut and Maine for 20 minutes combined, and then the Senator from North Dakota and myself for 30 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from South Dakota is recognized.

THE WAR ON TERROR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise to speak today about one of the great issues that faces us in this era, the war on terror. I rise to speak in support of the efforts being undertaken by our soldiers in Iraq. I consider my place on the Armed Services Committee to be an honor and a privilege. American soldiers are deployed the world over, and it is my duty to serve and to support them.

Today, our country is at war against an ideology of hate and oppression that has turned a peaceful religion into a platform for war. Our soldiers have faced such adversities throughout our history and defeated them. That is why yesterday I voted in favor of a constitutional amendment to protect the flag, which represents what our soldiers have always fought for.

The fight to combat Islamic fascism has not ended. Our soldiers, alongside Iraqi security forces, are fighting against the enemies of a free Iraq—enemies like Zarqawi, who made war on Americans and Iraqis alike. Zarqawi butchered innocent Iraqis in the streets with the hopes that he could intimidate them into submission or spark a civil war where his ideology of hatred could live. Zarqawi was wrong, and now he is dead.

Further, today we have reports that Iraqi security forces arrested a key al-Qaida figure who was involved in the destruction of the golden al-Askariya Mosque. Moreover, the Iraqis have not abandoned hope and neither should we. To the contrary, Iraqi and American forces are working together to bring a fledgling democracy into maturity. Iraqis are risking their lives so that their future generations can enjoy the freedoms of liberty.

While the Iraqis work toward unity, the U.S. Congress seems to be heading toward disunity. I am concerned over the increasingly visceral, unobjective, and unconstructive rhetoric launched by some on the other side regarding the global war on terrorism. I tried to remain silent on this matter waiting for the Democratic leadership to offer a constructive plan or enter into a constructive dialog. Unfortunately, neither of these things has happened.

To date, the Democratic plan for dealing with Iraq and the war on terror consists of simply quitting as soon as possible and launching a campaign of personal and negative attacks on the President and his administration. I suppose as we enter the beginning of an election year, the rhetoric will only get worse, and the issue will become more polarized.

The unfortunate victims of this Democratic charade are not the American people but the American soldier. Day after day, our soldiers see and hear people in this Chamber hammering away at the point that we are losing the war in Iraq, that Iraq is a lost cause or that this is a winless war, while all the time hiding behind the inconsistent mantra of opposing the war but supporting the soldiers. After visiting soldiers in both Iraq and Walter Reed Hospital, I am confident that for American soldiers there is no unwinnable war.

That is why I voted against Democratic amendments calling for troop withdrawals or artificial timelines. I believe the troops in Iraq are doing the work we have asked them to do, and that if we focus right now on artificial timelines, we will be doing them a grave disservice. I believe the calls that have come out of here are wrong for a couple of reasons.

First of all, they violate the spirit of the separation of powers doctrine that interferes with the President's ability to act as Commander in Chief.

Second, I think they turn what should be battlefield decisions into decisions made by politicians. Our commanders should make troop need decisions based on conditions on the ground.

The "long war," as referenced by President Bush and also by Osama bin Laden, is not a war for Iraq, it is a war for hope, compassion, kindness, and a restoration of freedom to people the world over.

Now is not the time to send a message to Islamic fascists that they have won and we are pulling out because America has lost its resolve.

It is important to spur the Iraqis on, but we cannot force them to try and establish a working democracy by threatening to leave.

Since March of 2003, when American troops entered Iraq, there has been a great deal of advancement. While some on the other side take every opportunity to point out flaws and failures, I would like to point out that in January of 2005, 8 million Iraqis voted for a Transitional National Assembly, and in August Iraqi assemblymen presented a Constitution to their countrymen. In October, 80 percent of the people voted to ratify that new Constitution, taking their first steps to create a permanent government.

The people of Iraq have not undertaken this path to freedom without danger. They risk their lives standing in lines at voting booths and recruiting stations. Iraqis do these things because

they know that they are taking the necessary steps which will govern their future.

While there have been positive advancements regarding the Government, the private sector has also seen improvements as well. There is much work to be done here. I will not stand before the Senate and state otherwise. However, the road to progress in Iraq is paved with growth. Oil production has increased from 1.5 million barrels per day to 2.25 million barrels per day. Electricity is also growing. U.S.-funded programs have added 2,700 megawatts to the national grid. It is clear that we need to inspire more Iraqi involvement, but that is not a farflung goal.

Since April 2003, 30,000 new businesses have started in Iraq, and their stock market is trading over \$100 million per day.

I am very proud of what American soldiers have done in Iraq, and I believe more needs to be done. Every day we help Iraq move to a permanent government is another day we help Iraq become stable and no longer in need of America's servicemen. I will not abandon the idea that a free Iraq can be achieved or allow my actions to be governed by opinion polls or popularity contests.

It is not just Iraq that we are talking about, it is about the global war on terror and American security. Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, Iraq has become the front line in the war on terror, and those terrorists who are pinned down in Iraq are not planning and launching attacks against the United States.

In fighting and winning the war on terror, "eternal vigilance" is the operative phrase. Thomas Jefferson said: "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance."

Irrespective of how or under what circumstances we got there, we must now complete the mission. We must win. Failure means relegating future generations to a world of terror and fear where thugs and rogues rule and where freedom, as we know it, becomes a thing of the past.

The global war on terror is about not only bringing stability and freedom and democracy to that region of the world, it is also about ensuring that Americans can live in peace and security in the future. Every single day that our brave and courageous men and women are taking the fight to the terrorists in Iraq, it means we are not fighting them on American soil.

So I rise today again to congratulate and thank those brave men and women who are carrying freedom's torch in Iraq and doing the heavy lifting that is necessary to keep this country safe and secure for the future.

Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MURKOWSKI). The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to amend my earlier unanimous consent request to add the following:

That after I have spoken for 10 minutes and Senator CONRAD has been recognized for 20 minutes, the Senator from Colorado, Mr. SALAZAR, be recognized for 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. I thank the Chair. (The remarks of Mr. LIEBERMAN and Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 3595 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

(The remarks of Mr. DURBIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 3588 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

THE BUDGET

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I came to the floor a few minutes ago when Senator GREGG from New Hampshire was here. Senator GREGG is the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee. I listened carefully as he talked about a plan to reform budgeting in America. The first thing I can recall was the phrase often used by a friend of mine who serves in the House of Representatives, Congressman DAVE OBEY of Wisconsin, who frequently chides Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle for "posing for holy pictures."

I thought to myself, how interesting it is to hear the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee coming to the floor preaching for dramatic reform when it comes to budgeting. If one were not aware of the history of budgeting under this administration and under Republican leadership in Congress, you might be able to sell this story. But it is hard to sell when you look at facts.

When President Bush took office, he inherited a surplus. It was one of the first surpluses in the Federal budget in decades. It was the result of President Clinton increasing taxes and cutting spending, determined to reduce the deficit.

We reached the point where we had surpluses that were being generated so they could pay down the debt to the Social Security trust fund, give it longer life, make certain that we were moving toward a fiscally sound future. President Bush inherited a Federal budget surplus. He also inherited a national debt of \$5.3 trillion.

Now where are we today, almost 6 years into the Bush-Cheney administration? The national debt in America has risen under the Bush-Cheney administration from \$5.3 trillion to almost \$9 trillion. In 6 years, it is a dramatic increase. During that 6-year period of time this administration, with a Republican Congress, has consistently given us deficit after deficit after deficit, digging the hole deeper and deeper.

So when you take a look at the situation, you say, clearly, the Democrats